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# SOBER THOUGHTS

ON

## PROPHECY.

### ESSAY I

THE INFANCY, YOUTH, MANHOOD, AND MATURITY,  
OF THE WESTERN OR PAPAL ANTICHRIST.

BY

J. W. NIBLOCK, D.D. F.S.A. F.R.S.L.;

MASTER OF HITCHIN-SCHOOL,

AND

CURATE OF NEWNHAM, HERTS.

“The folly of interpreters has been to foretell times and things, as if God designed to make them prophets: by this rashness, they have not only exposed themselves, but have brought the prophecy also into contempt.”

SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

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## PREFACE.

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THE subject of Prophecy having now, for some years, engaged the attention of many modern writers and popular preachers, in and out of the establishment, has, at length, engrossed that of many readers and hearers; and if both these classes confined themselves to the most "sure Word of Prophecy," and to the history of past ages, making history expound Prophecy, (of which it is the best and man's only key,) it would be at once an innocent, lawful, and profitable, subject of inquiry; but when the heresy of the Chiliastæ of A.D. 108 is reviving, when theories are invented, and speculations are indulged, perverting the faith, and unsettling the



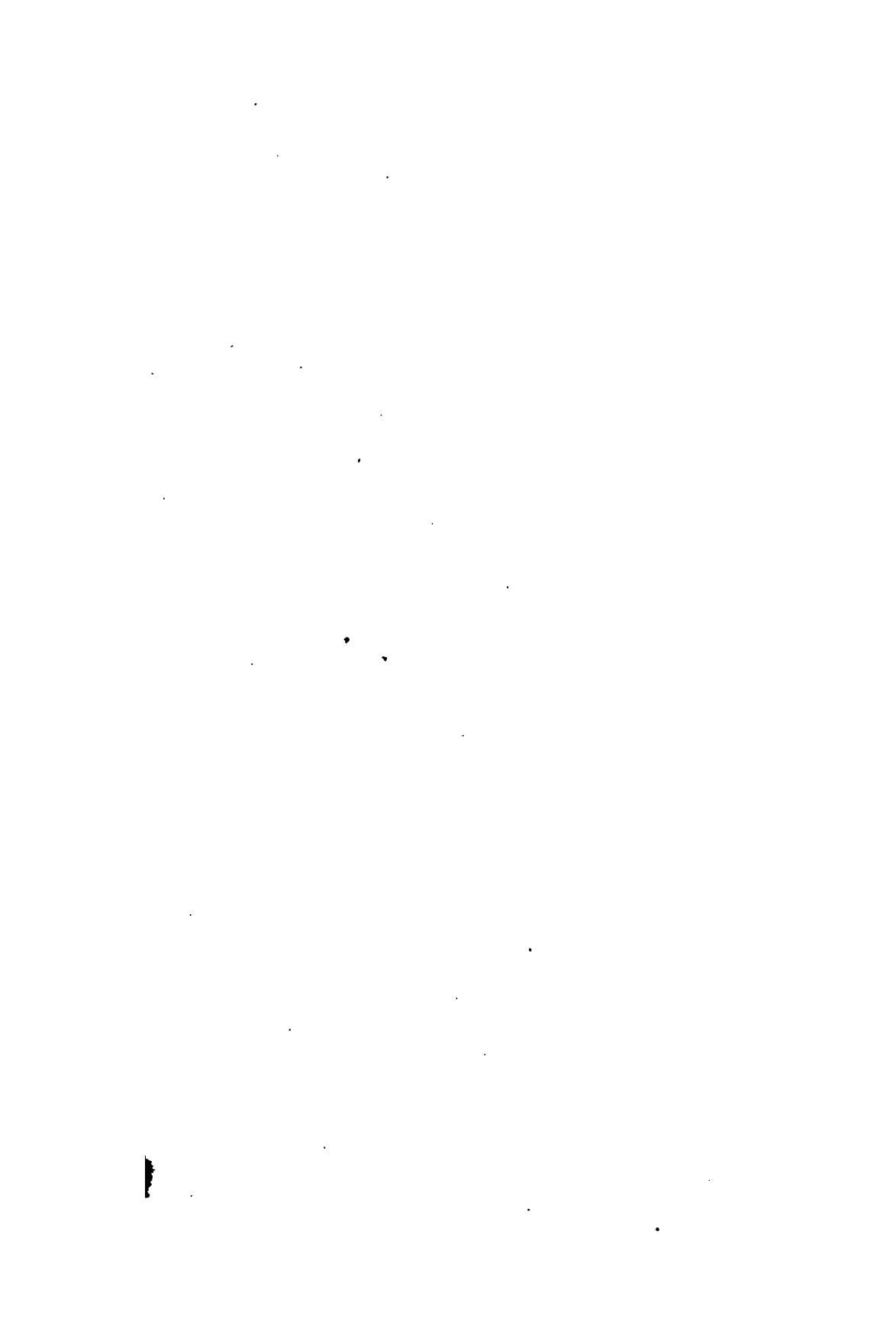
minds, of the weak, the sanguine, and the credulous, which sound learning, and even common sense, united to a knowledge of the events of past ages, can expose and refute; it is the duty of every one to do what he can, by stepping forward to stem the torrent of error which he perceives to be likely to divide the Church, and desolate the Sanctuary; \* encourage speculation, and diminish practice; distress the pious, and gladden the profane; and bring the personal ministry of the predictors, (if they turn out erroneous in their notions,) as well as the prophecies themselves, into undeserved contempt; and to endeavour to prove the fulfilment of the Divine predictions, by a reference, *not* to obscure, disputed, or trivial events, but to matters of fact, and those, affairs of moment.

Such is the object which the writer of this *first of a Series of Essays* on the subject of

\* It is to be feared that, when curiosity has been sated, and the weak side of modern Millennarianism is detected, by the non-accomplishment of events at the predicted periods, the congregations of those preachers, who advocate it, will dwindle; heresies and sects increase; and the brotherhood and friendly feeling, now happily subsisting among the clergy, will receive a severe shock.

Prophecy proposes to himself: how he has executed his task it shall be left with the public to decide; whose decision shall either call forth or suppress the remainder of the series. He deprecates no criticism, because he fears no fair and candid, however rigid, examination.

*February, 1828.*



# SOBER THOUGHTS,

&c.

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## ESSAY I.

It is too common with the Millennarians of the present day, in writing and speaking of Popery, to confine the attention to its reign and fall; and to calculate on both those events with too great a positivity, as if no other periods could be found which can possibly apply to them. Thus, the years A. D. 533 and 606\* have both been fixed on by Messrs. Frere and Faber, as well as by Messrs. Cunninghame, Irving, &c. &c. and their disciples, as the dates of its origin; and the corresponding years, A. D. 1792 and 1865, as the terminations of its reign: which latter are produced by adding the first of

\* Other æras, as 456, Mede; 620, Hales; 756, Lowman; are not noticed in this Essay, being abandoned by modern prophetical writers, either as too early or too late. They will however be noticed in a future Essay.

Daniel's three famous periods, i. e. 1260 years, to the former : as,  $533 \times 1260 - 1 = 1792$ .  $606 + 1260 - 1 = 1865$  : that is, 533, (when Justinian, the Emperor of Constantinople, the reviver of the Eastern or Græco-Roman Empire, is *said* to have made the Bishop of Rome, John II., the Head of all the Churches in the then Eastern and Western Divisions of the same,) being added to 1260, (which is the number of years of the predicted dominion and continuance of papacy,) brings us to the year of Christ, 1793 ; or rather, (deducting one year, of one of the extremes, for the sake of accurate calculation,) 1792 ; as, *from* 1800 *to* 1828 is not 28 years, but 27.

Before it is attempted to shew what the writer considers to be the true æras of the birth, youth, manhood, and dominion of papal power, or Antichrist,\* it will naturally be expected that he

\* On the first mention of the term " Antichrist," the writer begs to remark, that we have no *scriptural* sanction for so denominating the pope ; and, even when so used, that it does not always, and in all authors, signify the *enemy*, but sometimes the *imitator*, of Christ : this is one meaning of the preposition *anti*, (*ἀντί*, *pro*, *contra*, *vice*, *æquè*, *vicissim*, *loco alterius*,) so divines use the word Antitype, and grammarians 'Αντιστοιχος ; and it is worthy of remark, that it is principally in this good sense that the pious Bernard and other Roman Catholic writers use the word. When *they* speak of Antichrist, they apply it, in its worst sense, to the Antipopes ; as when Peter Leo (Anacletus II.) opposed, drove from Rome, and usurped the seat of Innocent II. The *true* pope they call " the

should assign his reasons for not allowing the two periods which he objects to, (viz. 533 and 606,) to be correct, adopting that rule which one of these authors (Faber) lays down, viz. to disprove and dispose of one theory before proposing another that differs.

The first here noticed, then, is March 533, the date of Justinian's edict, wherein, it is contended, he styles the then pope, "Head of the Churches of the East and West;" addresses him as "your holiness," and otherwise flatters the ambitious prelate, John II., Bishop of Rome.

But, that this grant of Justinian to John was neither the *origin*, nor the *perfection*, of papal sway appears hence.—1. Antichrist had already risen, as will be shewn, when the author comes to state his own views.—2. Popery was then only putting forth its *antennæ*, to feel or grope its way, as appears by the strides which it afterwards took to gain spiritual ascendancy and temporal dominion.—3. Neither John II. nor any of his nine immediate successors, Agapetus,

Vicar of Christ," "the Christ of the Lord;" and, "Christ himself." No one, before A. D. 1120, called the Bishop of Rome Antichrist; but they did so denominate the schismatical, or usurping bishop. Thus much is due to a community which, though a corrupt, apostate, and criminal, is yet, *ab origine*, a true church; which, all will allow, never "denied" either "the Father, or the Son," or the Holy Ghost, to be truly and properly "very God." See 1 John ii. 22.

Silverius, Vigilus, Pelagius, John III., Benedict, Pelagius II., Gregory, or Sabinianus, adopted the appellation, "Head of the Church."

—4. One of these ten bishops, viz. Gregory the Great, protested against its usurpation by John, patriarch of Constantinople,\* pronounced him to be Antichrist who should assume it, and, by way of contrast, called himself "Servus Servorum Dei.†—5. The title of "Universal Bishop"

\* To those of the Church of Rome who make the gift of Justinian to John their boast, it must be as mortifying to recollect that the title of "Universal Bishop" was used at Constantinople before it was at Rome, as it is to the supporters of Peter's primacy to know that he, of all the apostles, was the rashest: the one, next to Judas, most rebuked by his Master, and even reprov'd by his junior, St. Paul, for his "dissimulation."

† Modern prophets, (*absit invidia verbo,*) in order to account for this *mauvaise honte*, or mock modesty of John's successors, (how they dispose of Gregory's remonstrance and opposition to John of Constantinople we really do not know,) say, that these good Bishops of Rome, when they omitted to use, or affected to despise, or protested against, the title, "Head of the Church," forgot their honours and privileges. Is this likely? Are the honours assigned to men and things, in one age, ever after dropt or forgotten? Are the titles, honours, and privileges, earned or conferred, even in an inter-reign, always disowned, or disused? Acts of the *soi-disant* Parliament, indeed, are deservedly erased from the statute-book; but not always, or even generally, are the rights that are obtained, forgotten, or suffered to grow into desuetude. To this day are continued the Addresses which first were presented to Richard Cromwell, the son of the Usurper. Nor did the Philosophical Society, which began in the time of Oliver, experience any

was indeed bestowed on Boniface III, seventy-three years after, i. e. in the year 606, by Phocas, the usurping Emperor of Constantinople, to obtain the sanction of the Pope of Rome to his usurped sovereignty, and to procure his absolution for the murder of the Emperor Mauritianus, his master and predecessor.—6. The writers of the history of the bishops and popes of Rome divide them into these eight classes, viz.

1. 32 pious Bishops, from Linus, A.D. 68, to Sylvester, 315.

2. 33 tolerable Archbishops, from Marcus, 336, to Symmachus, 499.

3. 13 good Patriarchs, from Hormisda, 514, to Sabinianus, 604.

4. 38 usurping Nimrods,\* from Boniface, III., 606, to Leo IV., 847.

5. 40 luxurious Sodomites, from John VIII., 855, to Gregory V., 996.

6. 40 Egyptian Magicians, from Sylvester, II., 999, to Celestine IV., 1241.

other change than in being patronized, incorporated, and made "royal," by the legitimate, restored Sovereign. So in France the Legion of honour, instituted by Buonaparte, was continued and augmented by the restored Bourbons, Louis and Charles.

\* These epithets are rather quoted than approved of: it is no proof either of a good cause, or of sound sense, to call names. "The wisdom that is from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, and full of mercy."—James iii. 17.



7. 41 devouring Abaddons, from Innocent IV. 1243, to Pius III., 1503.

8. — Incurable Babylonians, from Julius II., 1503, to the present pope :—thus including these 10 bishops, (from John II., to Sabinianus,) among the 13 “ good Patriarchs,” before the “usurping Nimrods” began to arise in the see of Rome.

Others again divide them thus :—

1. Pastors, Bishops, Preachers, Martyrs, A.D. 70 to 314.

2. Mitred Lords, 314 to 606.

3. Popes, (πόποι,) Gods, Antichrists, 606 downwards : or,

1st Class, Linus to Sylvester, 70 to 314.

2d Class, Sylvester to Boniface III., 314 to 606.

3d Class, Boniface III. to the present Pope, 606 downwards.

But, however divided, none of those *before* 606 are either classed or characterized as bad.

Thus, then, A.D. 533 is not likely, from what we have yet seen in history, to be the æra of the *dominion* of popery.

The second æra fixed on, as the reign of papacy, is A.D. 606, in which year Boniface III. was called Universal Bishop by the Emperor Phocas, as is above stated.

What gives a greater colouring or semblance

of likelihood to the fixing of this second period (606) for the definite æra of popery is, that, in this very year, Mahomet, the eastern antichrist, sixteen years before the Hegira, began to forge his imposture; which, in the year 608, he began to preach and propagate. Coincidences, however striking and curious, are, notwithstanding, but very insecure foundations on which to build a system.

While this grant of supremacy is allowed by the writer to have been made, and due advantage to have been taken of it by Boniface himself, and all his papal successors, he yet maintains that neither the grant of Justinian in 533, (if we even allow it to have been accepted and made use of,) nor this second gift of Phocas, in 606, was of sufficient importance to be deemed *the* æra in question; it being the gift of a mere name; or, at most, the successful issue of a struggle for precedence; first, between Italian priests; and, secondly, between the bishops and archbishops of Rome, and the patriarchs of Constantinople, its rival both as to name and rank, or in temporal and ecclesiastical pre-eminence; the city being called Nova Roma; its site and vicinity, Romania; and its citizens, Romani.

Having thus attempted to disprove the two æras, which are by the moderns generally con-

tended for, as the origin or reign of Antichrist, the author will now proceed to state his own views of this most important event ; and he first of all maintains that the Son of Perdition, or Man of Sin,—1st. Was *conceived* and *born* in the age of the *Apostles*, A.D. 34 to 100.—2d. Grew up to *adolescence*, in the times of the *Fathers*, A. D. 100 to 300.—3d. Arrived to *virility* or *manhood*, in the reigns of the *Christian Emperors*, A.D. 300 to 600 ; and—4th. Attained *maturity* or *perfection*, in the dominion of *Popes* ; more particularly, however, in the very year which, he contends, was prophesied of by St. John, and which was inferentially and intimatingly foretold and limited by Daniel, by the mention of his last period, 1335 years.

If conjecture were all that the writer of this Essay had to adduce ; and one event were substituted for another, as the more probable æra, each and all alike unnoticed in, or unsupported by scripture ; he would not have committed his thoughts to paper, nor have entered the field against so numerous a force ; but the discovery which he has rather brought to light, than himself made, of the “ number of the beast,” carries conviction to his own mind, and obliges him to attempt to convince others, without at all pretending to *prophecy* which, in his opinion, is weak, presumptuous, and vain.

I. It is to be proved, that popery struggled for the birth, and was in its infancy, in the apostolic age. This will be set in the clearest light by the mere quotation of the apostolic writings.

A. D. 60. Acts xx. 29, 30.—“ For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

“ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

A. D. 55. 2 Cor. xi. 13—15.—“ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

“ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

“ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

A. D. 58. Galatians i. 7.—“ There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”

Chap. iv. 9—11.—“ But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

“ Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

“ I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

A. D. 58. Col. ii. 16—23.—“ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days :

“ Which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ.

“ Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind ;

“ And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

“ Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

“ (Touch not ; taste not ; handle not ;

“ Which all are to perish with the using ;) after the commandments and doctrines of men ?

“ Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body ; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

A. D. 52. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 6—12.—“ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (the day of Christ v. 2.) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

“ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

“ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

“ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

“ And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

“ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

“ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

“ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

“ That they all might be damned who believed

not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

A. D. 55. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3.—" Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ;

" Speaking lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron ;

" Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Chap. v. 15.—" For some are already turned aside after Satan."

A. D. 59. 2 Tim. iii. 1—6, 7—9.—" This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

" For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

" Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

" Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ;

" Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof : from such turn away.

" For of this sort are they which creep into

houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.

“ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth : men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

“ But they shall proceed no further : for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as their’s also was.”

A. D. 55. Titus i. 10.—“ For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision.”

A. D. 67. 2 Peter ii. 1.—“ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

Chap. iii. 3.—“ Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts.”

A. D. 87. 1 John ii. 18, 19.—“ Little children, it is the last time : and as ye have heard that Anti-christ shall come, even now are there many Anti-christs ; whereby we know that it is the last time.

“ They went out from us, but they were not of us ; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us : but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”



the death of St. John, the last of the apostles, to A.D. 300.

A.D. 118.\* Alexander.—1. Brought in the confection.—2. Introduced the use of holy water, for the purging of men's souls, and the driving away of devils.

A. D. 139. Telesphorus.—Instituted the *jejunium quadragesimale*, or forty days' fast in Lent.

A. D. 150. Hyginus.—1. Was the first that was called Pope.—2. Brought in Sponsors in baptism.—3. Made Cardinals, those hinges (*cardines*) on which the whole papal system turns.

A. D. 154. Pius.—Issued a decree for the uniform keeping of Easter on a Sunday.

A. D. 161. Anicetus.—Ordered priests to shave the crowns of their heads.

A. D. 195. Victor.—Excommunicated some Greek or Eastern bishops, for not keeping Easter on the same day as the Latin or Western Church did; he adopting the tradition of Sts. Peter and Paul, in preference to that of Sts. John and Philip, which fixed it on the Sunday *after* the 14th day of the first new moon, after the vernal equinox. After the council of Nice, those who opposed the Latins were called *Quartadecimani*, or "fourteenth-day men."

\* The dates here given, are those of the *accessions* of the popes or bishops, according to Bishop Prideaux.

A. D. 203. Zephyrinus.---1. Appointed glass\* for wooden chalices, lest the wine should be absorbed.---2. Went bare-footed in imitation of our Saviour.---3. Injured his person, like Origen, "for the kingdom of heaven's sake."†---4. Was a follower of the heresy of the Montanists.

A. D. 221. Calixtus.---Established the four great feasts of the church, which are continued to this day.

A. D. 227. Urbanus.---1. Turned the holy vessels into silver.---2. Consented to the excommunication of Origen, by Demetrius, patriarch of Alexandria.

A. D. 254. Cornelius.---Was opposed by the first Antipope Novitianus, which is called the first of the twenty-nine papal Schisms.

A. D. 258. Stephanus.---Contended, against Cyprian, against the re-baptizing of those who had been baptized by heretics.

A. D. 273. Felix.---Built churches to the martyrs, and appointed sacrifices for their altars.

A. D. 275. Eutychianus.---First blest grapes, beans, &c. &c. on the altar.---2. Buried the martyrs in purple vestments.

A. D. 298. Marcellinus.---Through fear of

\* Late discoveries have convinced antiquarians that the making of glass was known to the ancients.

† Matthew xix. 12.

death by persecution, offered incense to Mars, the heathen God, which occasioned the calling of a synod against him, by which he was censured and condemned.

Most of these actions prove, more or less, the growth of superstition, the aspirings of ambition, and the attempts at actual, though not nominal, supremacy, in those Bishops of Rome, whose successors, in the next and subsequent periods, became "Lords over God's heritage," and usurped "dominion over the faith of God's elect."

The *Son of Perdition* having, by this time, become *of age*, did, by the favour of Constantine, enter into the possession of his estate, as will be seen, by shewing, *thirdly*, what events took place in the reigns of the Christian Emperors.\*

A. D. 304. Marcellus.—1. Stoutly withstood the co-emperor Maximian.—2. In his days the council of Eliberis (305) forbade the marriage of the clergy, which the council of Niocesaræa limited to the unmarried.

\* The Church, while it was outwardly protected, enlarged, enriched, and honoured by Constantine, yet was only "holpen with a little help," (Daniel xi. 34,) for it was inwardly corrupted and debased, not only by "flatteries" and hypocrisies, heresies and schisms, superstition and idolatry; but also by pride, ambition, luxury, and avarice. Temporal prosperity is seldom favourable to growth in grace, either in individuals or in communities: "Persecution is the hot-bed of piety," and "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

A. D. 315. Sylvester.—1. Excited Constantine, the first \* Christian emperor, to build more churches in honour of saints and martyrs.—2. Made a decree for the celebrating the Lord's day, or first day † of the week, instead of the Jewish sabbath.—3. Had many gifts in money, lands, rents, benefices, and other favours, heaped on him, and his bishopric, and especially on the church of the Latern, by the emperor, (*not* including that called "the Patrimony of St. Peter.")—4. Had a golden crown given to him by that prince, which yet he refused to wear, contenting himself with a Phrygian mitre.—5. Ordered the

\* Though Constantine is generally called the first Christian emperor, Philippus Arabs, who reigned nearly a century before him, indeed, both the Philippi, professed and favoured Christianity.—See Mosheim, and the Universal History.

† How often are the admissions of writers mistaken and mistated, and made to subserve a cause, to the success of which they are cordially opposed! A half-informed reader, mistaking the drift of the writer's mention of several preceding and subsequent legislative acts of the Bishops of Rome, which were lawful and scriptural, may possibly pervert his meaning, and suppose, and even maintain, that he admits that these were the *origins* of the things referred to. So far is he from such a concession, that he here, once for all, begs explicitly to state, that, in almost all these instances, the Bishops of Rome only hereby *declared and made* that to be the statute-law of the Church, which was, from the first, the unwritten or traditional law of Christianity, or declared it to be the sense of Scripture; acting as the authorized expositors of holy writ. Where the Scripture is silent, the Church should speak: where it is obscure, she may interpret.

assembling of the council of Nice, A.D. **326**; in which was drawn up the Nicene creed; and Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage, were made metropolitan cities of Italy, Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Africa.

A.D. **336**. Marcus.—1. Introduced the chanting of the Nicene Creed.—2. Gave the woollen pall to the Bishop of Hostia.

A.D. **337**. Julius.—1. Excited Athanasius to draw up his famous creed.—2. Fixed the nativity on December 25th, instead of January 6th.

A. D. **352**. Liberius.—Subscribed, through force, to Arianism, and condemned Athanasius, of both which actions, however, he repented.

A. D. **358**. Felix II.—1. Communicated with Arians, though not an Arian himself.—2. Opposed Liberius in the bishopric, which made the second papal schism.

A.D. **367**. Damasus.—1. Overcame Ursicinus in the 3d (or 2d continued) contest for the episcopal chair, in which blood was shed.—2. Made Jerome a cardinal, and changed his name, first, to Anastatius, secondly, to Laurentius.—3. Set Jerome on correcting and altering the Latin Vulgate Bible.—4. Ordered the prosecution of those who refused to pay tythes.—5. Added the Doxology, or “Gloria Patri,” (“Glory be to the Father, &c.”) to the end of every psalm.—6. The luxury of the clergy was so great in his time,

that a heathen consul said, "Make me Pope, and I will immediately turn Christian."

A. D. 385. Siricius.—1. Excluded from communion those who had been twice married.—2. Admitted Monks into holy orders.—3. Entertained high notions of the merit of virginity.—4. Fiercely persecuted Jovinian of Verona.—5. Called a council at Rome, (386,) which forbade the clergy co-habiting with their wives.

A. D. 398. Anastatius.—Introduced the standing up at the reading of the gospel.

A. D. 417. Zosimus.—Brought the use of tapers into the church.

A. D. 419. Boniface.—1. Opposed Eulalius in the attainment of the bishopric, making the fourth schism.—2. Pretended to work miracles.

A. D. 432. Sixtus III.—1. Was accused of incontinency, but acquitted.—2. Was called, for his many buildings, "The enricher of the Church."—3. Appointed a holy day for St. Peter's chair.

A. D. 440. Leo.—1. Pretended to work miracles.—2. Rectified the Cyclus Paschatis, or Golden Number, by the advice and assistance of Victorinus of Aquitania.—3. Introduced the Litany now in use,\* by the aid of Mamertus Claudius of Vienna.—4. Brought in auricular

\* Much altered, of course, at and since the Reformation.

confession.---5. Ordained that no minister should marry any but a virgin.

A. D. 467. Simplicius.---1. Built palaces.---2. Domineered over the Church of Ravenna.---3. Decreed that no clergy should hold benefice of the laity.---4. Said that gifts to churches would purchase heaven.

A. D. 483. Felix III.---1. Opposed the Henoticon or union, proposed by the Emperor Zeno, between the Eastern and Western churches.---2. Excommunicated Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople.

A. D. 491. Gelasius.---1. Fixed the Canon of Scripture.---2. Made many cardinals.---3. Dedicated a church to St. Michael, the patron of the pope, and of the early kings of France.

A. D. 497. Anastatius II.---1. Favoured the Eutychian and Nestorian heretics.---2. Excommunicated Anastatius, the Greek emperor, for favouring the heresy of Acacius, into which he himself subsequently fell.

A. D. 499. Symmachus.---1. Opposed Laurence's claim to the papal chair; thus making the fifth schism.---2. Threatened to detain and punish in purgatory the soul of one Paschasius.

A. D. 514. Hormisdas.---Excommunicated the emperor Anastatius, for saying that the emperor should command and not bow to a bishop.

A. D. 523. John I.---1. Stirred up the bi-

shops of Italy against their sovereign, on his being sent by Theodoric, king of Italy, to Justin, the Eastern emperor, to intercede for the Arians.—2. Pretended to work miracles.

A. D. 526. Felix IV.—1. Excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople.—2. Divided the chancel from the body of the church.—3. Introduced extreme unction.\*—4. Patronized Benedict, the Father of Monkery; and Dionysius Exiguus, the framer, or reformer, of the circle for Easter.

A.D. 530. Boniface II.—1. Conquered Dioscorus in the sixth schism.—2. Appointed Vigilius to succeed him; and attempted to order that every pope should appoint his successor; but failed, through the opposition of the clergy.

A. D. 531. John II.—Had an embassy sent to him, with gifts, from the emperor Justinian, for condemning Anthemius, the Arian patriarch of Constantinople.

A. D. 534. Agapetus.—1. Caused the removal of Anthemius, and the substitution of

\* That writer will deserve well of his church and country, who shall prove, (as it certainly may be proved,) that we are right in the disuse, and papists wrong in the retention, of the apostolically-enjoined practice of anointing the sick, (James v. 14,) as well as in not practising and retaining the community of goods, (Acts ii. 44, 45; c. iv. 32, 34—37,) the love-feasts, feasts of charity, (Jude ver. 12,) the daily Lord's Supper, the self-support of ministers, the kiss of charity, the washing the saints' feet, &c. &c. &c.



Menna in his room.—2. Sent a confession of the Catholic\* or Christian faith to Justinian.

A. D. 536. Silverius.—1. Supported Menna in his seat, against Anthemius.—2. Was deposed by Vigilius, on the ground of favouring the siege of Rome by the Goths.

A. D. 537. Vigilius.—1. Supplanted Sylverius, and thus made the seventh schism.—2. Having broken his promise to the empress Theodora, he was summoned to Constantinople; there dragged about the streets with a halter round his neck; and afterwards banished.

\* As the members of the Roman, or Latin church are wrong, in calling themselves, their faith, and their community, *the Catholic*, or Universal Church; when a much larger portion of the world is occupied by a much greater number of Christians, viz. the Greek church, and the nine other ancient churches in Asia and Africa; as if all others were heretics or schismatics; so are those uninformed Protestants equally in error, who find fault with the Church of England for the use of that word in her services. In that all-but-divine volume, the book of Common Prayer, whose most appropriate epithet is, “The Daughter of the Bible,” the most complete Manual of Devotion in existence, and the legitimate expositor of the Word of God; the words “Catholic Faith,” and “Catholic Church,” are never used as meaning the *Roman Catholic*, but the Universal Church of Christ, “that is,” as she expounds it in her 55th Canon, “the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world.” Under the shield of her protection, the writer takes leave to add this definition of the Catholic Church, viz. “all who love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity and truth,” by whatever name they are distinguished among men: in a word, “all the Israel of God,” wherever dispersed, or however distressed.

A. D. 556. Pelagius.—Tampered for the supremacy, not from canons, councils, grants of emperors, or apostolical ordinances, but from the appointment of Christ himself.

A. D. 559. John III.—1. Was fixed in his chair by Narses or Narsetus, who brought in the Lombards, and expelled the Goths.—2. Made a decree, cutting off any of the clergy from the title of Chief Priest, or Universal Bishop.

A. D. 579. Pelagius II.—Was made bishop without the consent of the emperor Tiberius; to excuse which, he sent Gregory, afterwards his successor, to Constantinople.

A. D. 590. Gregory the Great.—1. Called himself “*servus servorum Dei*,” and was not desirous of being made bishop.\*—2. Translated the archbishopric from London to Canterbury.—3. Earnestly withstood the claim of John,

\* The expression, “*nolo episcopari*,” “I do not wish,” (*non volo*,) or “I am not solicitous,” “to be a bishop,” whenever it was made use of, is very different from “I *will not* be made a bishop,”—the version often given of it by a certain class of writers; but, even if it bore that sense, what has it to do with English bishops? Neither our English form of consecration, nor the Latin original, has it: nor has even the Pontificale of the Church of Rome got the words! And yet, readers of newspapers are, every now and then, led to suppose that every bishop-elect in England uses it! Was it not spoken by Ambrose of Milan, when he ran away to avoid being chosen bishop of that city?

patriarch of Constantinople, to the title of Universal Bishop.—4. Played the politician both with the emperor Mauritius, his patron; and with Phocas, the murderer and successor of Mauritius.—5. Carried in procession the image of the Virgin Mary.—6. Brought in the use of candles at Candlemass.—7. Added 4 days to Lent.—8. Made a decree against the marriage of priests, which he afterwards repealed.—9. Introduced many superstitious rites, addresses to Saints, the Canon of the mass, &c.—10. Said he had delivered the soul of Trajan from purgatory by his prayers.

A. D. 604. Sabinianus.—1. Wished to burn the voluminous and pious works of his predecessor Gregory.—2. Turned the gifts of corn to the poor, made by Gregory, into purchases.—3. Slandered his pious predecessor, as if he had wasted the revenues of the church.—4. Introduced the use of bells.

This is the *third* period of papal Antichrist; after which, the papacy became, what St. John calls, a “beast,” or temporal kingdom; the clergy, a “false prophet;” and the church, a “harlot;” as will be seen in the *fourth* stage of the history of the Man of Sin, which we do not hesitate to denominate

“THE MATURITY OR PERFECTION OF PAPACY.”

Here, before we proceed, it may not be out of place, to refer the reader to the oppressive and cruel acts of the Emperors of Rome towards the popes, as recorded in history; and it will be hardly possible to keep from asking the question—If Popery had reached its maturity in 533, or even in 606, would the domineering and intolerant spirit of that church, and of the pope-dom, have submitted to them? “The Man of Sin,” after he became such, owned *no* superior authority, divine or human. We come now to the *fourth* æra.

A. D. 606. Boniface III.—1. Obtained from Phocas, the emperor, that *episcopal* supremacy which is now made so much of.—2. Appropriated the name of pope\* to the See of Rome, which formerly was common to other bishops.—3. Changed the epistolary style of episcopal briefs from, “I beseech you, brethren,” to “We will and command you.”

A. D. 607. Boniface IV.—1. Devoted the Pantheon at Rome to the Virgin, saints, and martyrs.—2. Instituted All-Hallows day.—3. Turned his father’s house into a monastery, and endowed it to maintain monks.—4. In his days

\* Papa, *father*: hence our bishops are called “Fathers in God.” Some maintain that it was decreed, in the pontificate of Gregory VII., (who acceded A.D. 1073,) that the term “pope” should be confined to the person of the Bishop of Rome.

a council was held at Rome, respecting the primacy of the Roman church over other churches.

A. D. 615. Deus-dedit, or Deodatus.—1. Forbad the marriage of sponsors.—2. Pretended to work miracles.

A. D. 618. Boniface V.—1. Protected and privileged murderers and thieves, who fled to the sanctuary for refuge.

A. D. 626. Honorius.—1. Was charged by the 3d council of Constantinople with being a Monothelite.—2. Introduced the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus into the church of St. Peter at Rome.\* ---3. Appointed the feast of the exaltation of the Cross.

A. D. 639. Severinus.—Crouched *servilely* to Isaacus, the Exarch of Ravenna, who robbed him of the Lateran-treasury, to pay his soldiers.

A. D. 641. John IV.—1. Stirred himself

\* Many are the events in which the placing in the sanctuary the abomination that maketh desolate, spoken of by Daniel (xi. 31, and xii. 11,) seemed to receive, not its whole or sole fulfilment, indeed, but its first, second, third, &c. accomplishment, at Jerusalem. As by—

1. Antiochus Epiphanes, B. C. 167. See 1 Maccabees i. 20—64.

2. Pompey, B. C. 63.

3. Titus, A.D. 70. See Matthew xxiv. 15; Mark xiii. 14; Luke xxi. 20.

4. Adrian, A.D. 132.

In like manner, the Christian church has been polluted by Mahommedism, and by Popery; and, as on this occasion, by individual popes.

much in the celebration of Easter, and the translating of the bones of martyrs.---2. Allowed Rotharis, of Lombardy, to place two bishops in one see; one Orthodox, the other an Arian.

A. D. 642. Theodorus.---Deprived Pyrthus, patriarch of Constantinople, for favouring the Acephalites.

A. D. 649. Martin.---1. Splendidly decked churches.---2. Appointed holy days, the shaving of priests' polls, and enforced celibacy in the priesthood.---3. Having been too forward in banishing Paul, patriarch of Constantinople, he was sent for by Constantius, the emperor, and banished for life to Pontus.

A. D. 654. Eugenius.---Tame and inactive, was interdicted, by his priests and chaplains, from saying mass, unless he burnt some heretical letters which he had received.

A. D. 665. Vitalianus.---1. Excommunicated Maurus of Ravenna, and was himself anathematized in return.---2. Greatly favoured monkery.---3. Above all, (here is the number or date of the beast, and the perfection of "The Man of Sin,")

A. D. 666, he resolved to cause all public worship, throughout the Western provinces, to be performed in Latin; (thus taking away the daily service of foreign churches in the vernacular or mother tongue;) and, accordingly, he sent into this country two legates, (Theodore, afterwards

archbishop of Canterbury, and Hadrian,) to introduce the Latin service here; robbing the people of the benefit of the means of grace, and the hope of glory; and obliging them to worship they know not what, in a language they did not understand.

Here we may stop our researches; the object of our investigation being found, and an event being met with, not less remarkable for the tyranny, cruelty, and blasphemy, of the Antichristian power, that could dare thus to usurp and to exert *dominion* over the churches of God, than for the doing it at a time so exactly coincident with the number, date, or year, 666! Who, on reading this, and comparing it with Rev. xiii. 18,\* can refuse to admit that this is the period in question? Its agreement with scripture, and its paramount importance, place it beyond a doubt.

Having shewn, and, it is hoped, proved, from the history of papacy itself, that, not in 533, nor in 606, but in 666, the Popes got dominion, and sat, as God, in His temple, the author will now assign his reasons for fixing on this number of 666 as a *date*,† in preference to all other conjec-

\* "Here is wisdom: let him that hath understanding *count* the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred, threescore and six."

† "Numerus bestię.] Temporis scilicet quo idololatria, summoperè vulnerata, vires animosque resumpsit." "Numer-

tures.—1. It is a scriptural number, being predicted by the apostle John, in the before-cited text, (Rev. xiii. 18.)\*—2. It brings the third and last, or millennial, period of Daniel, (1335,) to the close of the year 2000, instead of 1867, or 1940,†

us, in stylo Apocalyptico, est numerus annorum ad exortum hujus nominis sive Dominii, quo respectu dicitur numerus nominis.” “Hic exprimitur numerus annorum, post quos Antichristus proditurus est, post annos numero 666.”—Poli Synopsis.—See also Prideaux, Fox, Mosheim, and others.

\* As we are told by St. John and Daniel, that some things are sealed and shut up, as if to check curiosity, and defy conjecture, so are we here expressly commanded to “*calculate* the number;” and, by giving such a clue as was safe, proper, and prudent to afford, while the church was not only “under tutors and governors,” but under lords and masters, tyrants and persecutors, “until the times appointed of the Father,” an intimation is given that such enquiry shall not be made in vain.

† By setting aside the Hebrew text of Daniel viii. 14, which is 2300, and by preferring the Greek or Septuagint reading of that passage, which is 2400; some modern expositors, confounding the Mahomedan or Eastern, with the Papal or Western Antichrist, after deducting 553, (the year B. C. of Daniel’s vision,) from 2400, predict that in 1847, Christ will “reign,” *in person*, “on Mount Zion, at Jerusalem,” over the restored and converted Jews!! Others, adding Daniel’s last period, 1335, to 533, say, that in 1867 the Millennium will commence, which others, substituting 606 for 533, make to take place in 1940: whereas, if the Vitalianian æra, 666, which has been contended for in this Essay, be the true period of papal despotism, then popery will not be extinct until 1925; the Jews will not be restored until 1955; nor the Millennium, or *spiritual* reign of Christ and the saints, take place until 2000; according to Daniel’s three great periods of 1260, 1290, and 1335 years, (chap. xii. 7, 11, 12,) being respectively added to 666; nor will the world come to its appointed end, ‘till the *termination* of the great and final apostacy, which will suc-



(inasmuch as 1335 and 666, *minus* 1, being added together, make up that exact sum.)—3. It allows an interval to elapse, between the present time and the Millennium, sufficient to accomplish, by ordinary means, *without the aid of miracles*, the great works of education, and evangelization, which are now begun.—4. It makes the seven Chiliads, or seven thousand years, of the world, tally with the seven days of the creation. For, as the world was six days in being made, and the next day, or seventh, was the Sabbath, or rest of God, so will the church, at this rate, have been exactly six thousand years in being perfected; and have “a thousand years,” or millennium of rest; “a thousand years” being (equivalent) “with the Lord as one day, and one day” (typical of) “a thousand years.” And, lastly, because every other act preceding this of Vitalianus, whether done by bishop, archbishop, patriarch, or pope, of Rome, was as nothing compared to this stretch of Antichristian power, this dominion of “the Man of Sin.” This is, in fact, the date of the reign Antichrist, “the number of the beast:” the acme or zenith of papal sway. All the other acts of the popedom were but marks or spots of the beast; they were petty squabbles between rival priests, little more than

the thousand years; when God shall have “accomplished the number of his elect, and shall hasten his kingdom,” not on this earth, but in heaven.

empty titles and pompous appellations; but *this! this* was “lording” it “over” the consciences of “God’s heritage;” “domineering” over their “faith;” obstructing and poisoning the channels of mercy and the means of grace, at both extremes; blocking up the approaches of the soul to God; shutting the door of the kingdom of heaven in the face of the worshipper; robbing God of the honour due to his name, and the soul of the food provided for its sustenance; taking away the key of knowledge from the people; making the worship of God an unintelligible jargon, and his temple a Babel:\* in a word, this was a taking away of “the daily sacrifice,” or “service,” and the placing in its stead that “abomination” which, from that day to this, has made “desolate” of edification, and of intelligence, the minds and the souls of the deluded worshippers, in “the sanctuary of strength,” where God ought to be worshipped “with the heart, and with the understanding,” “in spirit and in truth.”

\* See 1 Cor. xiv. 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 14—19.













7











1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

